



Matthews Hall

Established 1918

Friday, May 22, 2020

Dear Parents:

With our upside-down weekly COVID schedules, I hope that all MH families have been able to enjoy some of the sunshine that, by rights, we were entitled to *last weekend*. I mean seriously! Did we need a long weekend of more “indoor recesses”? I can hear the resounding “no” from every home. Although this week’s beautiful weather has been muted by ongoing restrictions in most areas of life, it has been a relief and ideal for major progress on the exterior of our building project. The bricks are “flying” into place on the façade and the push toward the finish line is in sight! Bring on September!

As I shared mid-week, the Government of Ontario has extended school closures for the remainder of this academic year and we fully expect the emergency mandate to remain in place for provincial independent schools, too. While it is certainly beyond our control to alter this decision, we share your frustration and anxiety about the seemingly endless measures that experts feel are required to “flatten the curve”. As we continue to see, there are many differing “expert” opinions on all of this. Nevertheless, as we practice patience and solidarity, we also put into practice what the 19th century British infantry soldiers were trained to do in formation – we work at keeping our eyes focused at “ten degrees above the horizon”.

Actually, it is not as hard as it sounds and it is also not bad advice. What if, as a school and individuals, we did this? What if we trained our eyes to look just out and beyond optical infinity? Lifted our eyes from the daily frustrations? What might be the result? To begin with, it might allow us to shed some of the unease of the present moment with all its surreal routines and indeterminate precautions. It might also force us to appreciate what we had, have, and will have again. It may even expose some attitudes of entitlement and complacency and what many of our fellow citizens may have taken for granted all along (it’s a long list!).

It may seem bizarre, but a quick survey of the world’s past pandemics is strangely reassuring. I don’t mean to diminish the hardships and very real consequences of such events. However, the fact that regular life eventually does return – as it absolutely will – is something you can see twinkling on the horizon, if you just squint your eyes.

In terms of school life, while there may be a coming transition period, we will be in excellent shape to respond creatively and quickly! For example, our new building will offer wider corridors, lofty ceilings, and carefully-designed and ventilated spaces with strategic sightlines that will make teaching and learning more effective, enjoyable, and safe!

Large schools with innumerable portables, shoulder-to-shoulder hallways and lunchrooms, and desks crammed into inadequate classrooms are the post-industrial revolution model of elementary education whose ship has long sailed. We continue to reimagine something

different at Matthews Hall and – while we may be small – we know from the research and from our own experience that smaller schools offer many advantages in “the best of times and the worst of times”.

As we look just above the horizon during this sunny week, the advantages of “small school, smart choice” may be even clearer!

Debeo Possum Volo!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ric Anderson". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "R" and "A".

Ric Anderson
Head of School



HOUSE CHALLENGE: “HEALTHY SELFIES!”

Our next House Challenge will focus on taking time for our physical and mental health. Staff and students: when you are taking a mind or body break – take a ‘selfie’ (or ask your parents to take your picture!) and send it to Miss Moore for a House Point. Be sure to tag your House! Some examples include a walk, bike ride, jog, reading a book for fun, gardening, knitting, or puzzles. Be creative and show us how you are staying Healthy!



INDIVIDUAL AWARDS—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10TH

Our individual student awards presentations are going virtual. Since we cannot gather in the library this year to recognize each student for their academic and character strengths – teachers will host a Google Meet to share each student’s award. Parents are encouraged to join in. The schedule of Meets is below. Please note there will be **NO** other Google Meets held that day.

JK—9:00 am

4L— 10:45 am

SK—9:15 am

5H—11:00 am

1A—9:30 am

5N—11:15 am

2M—9:45 am

6L— 11:30 am

2P—10:00 am

7M—1:00 pm

3F—10:15 am

7P—1:30 pm

4C –10:30 am

8B—2:00 pm

